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SUBJECT: Southern Sudan: Pangak Fighting Continues as UNMIS  
Attacked

¶1. (U) An UNMIS monitoring team was attacked while patrolling the Nile during a routine joint monitoring mission on August 17. The UNMIS boat patrol was fired upon by unknown forces an hour south of Malakal near New Pangak (Note: this is not the town of Pangak, which is further upriver. End note.) A statement from the Ceasefire Joint Military Commission (CJMC) has called this a serious violation of both the ceasefire agreement and the CPA.

¶2. (U) The UNMIS team was comprised of two patrol boats with 25 Bangladeshi UN Force Protection Soldiers, three Indian UN observers, a Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) monitor, and a monitor from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). While the attack was largely by small arms fire, a rocket was reportedly fired at the patrol and narrowly missed. Two UNMIS soldiers and the SAF monitor received minor gunshot wounds and have been hospitalized. The UNMIS force withdrew as soon as the fighting began.

¶3. (SBU) This oil-rich area has been the source of intermittent fighting over the past year between the SPLA and Gabriel Tang, a commander with the South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF). Embassy officials spoke with Tang and SSDF leader Gordon Kong, who said that the current fighting began with an attack by the SPLA on August 12 and has included some civilian casualties. The SSDF claims that Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) President Salva Kiir declared war on them during his recent visit to the United States.

¶4. (SBU) While investigations are ongoing, a high-ranking UNMIS official told the Acting Consul General in Juba that he also believes the SPLA is conducting an offensive against the SSDF between Malakal and Pangak. While it is not yet confirmed, he believes the SPLA may be responsible for the attack on the UNMIS patrol, and that it could have been an effort to keep the UN out while they finish their operations. All INGOs and UN agencies have pulled out of the area and the UNMIS has temporarily stopped patrols while they make plans for more robust policing. The UNMIS official believes that this fighting will continue, and could eventually culminate in a large battle in New Pangak, home to a major SSDF base.

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